WHAT TO DO WHEN STARTING A NEW BUSINESS
CHECKLIST

The checklist below shows some of the many things that have to be done when starting a new business – before the start-up, once the business is in operation and on an ongoing basis thereafter.

BEFORE START-UP
☐ Choose management advisers – an accountant, an attorney and a banker.
☐ Develop a business plan, including cash flow projections
☐ Using the business plan, establish a relationship with a banker. Possible bank services include:
  1. Credit-card merchant account
  2. Business checking account
  3. Working capital loan
  4. Equipment loan
  5. Lock-box services
☐ Select the legal entity and yearend
☐ Find a location for the business
☐ Negotiate a lease
☐ Design the layout of the facility
☐ Prepare all the necessary legal documents, as applicable:
  1. Partnership agreements
  2. Articles of incorporation and first organizational minutes
  3. Bylaws
  4. Federal identification number (SS-4)
  5. State and local license applications
  6. Sales tax identification number
  7. State unemployment number
  8. Industry-specific license
☐ Obtain quotes for and then order office furnishings and equipment
☐ Order office supplies
☐ Order business cards and business stationery
☐ Order office telephone number
☐ Purchase adequate insurance:
  1. Health
  2. Malpractice
  3. Liability
  4. Workers’ compensation
  5. Life
  6. Fidelity bond
  7. Computer and equipment
  8. Umbrella
  9. Employee dishonesty
☐ Register the business name with local and state authorities

START-UP
☐ Establish prices for your goods and services
☐ Promote the business’ opening through:
  1. Press releases to local and national media
  2. Advertising
  3. Direct-mail announcement
  4. Other: (This depends on the target market defined in the business plan. For example, a restaurant or store might send special coupons for discounts to local residents or present a grand opening event and send invitations to prospective customers, or a manufacturer or supplier of office supplies might offer special discounts to local businesses.)
☐ Seek, interview and make offers to job candidates
☐ Select and implement a financial recordkeeping system. (While this can be either manual or computerized, it must be implemented consistently. If the business records a particular type of transaction one way at the start, such transactions must continue to be recorded in a similar manner to avoid confusion.) Aspects of recordkeeping include:
  1. Accounts payable
  2. Accounts receivable
  3. Inventory Tracking
  4. Order entry

ONGOING OPERATIONS
☐ Develop personnel policies and procedures
☐ Prepare quarterly payroll returns and verify timely tax deposits
☐ Prepare quarterly or monthly financial statements
☐ Perform yearend tax planning, at least one month before the yearend
☐ Prepare annual federal, state and payroll returns
☐ Develop employee job descriptions
☐ Review existing insurance coverage at least one a year
☐ Prepare and maintain personnel files
☐ Establish a petty cash fund and policy
☐ Establish answering mechanism for after hours
☐ Join industry associations and groups
☐ Verify listing in the yellow pages of area phone directories
☐ Register trademarks (word, name, symbol or device) that indicate a unique identity on which your business is building